



Humboldt County
Department Of Health & Human Services
Public Health Branch
Public Health Laboratory

Pepper Stockton, Laboratory Director

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707-268-2179 fax: 707-445-7640

Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.

Tick Collection and Testing for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (the bacteria which causes Lyme disease) Information Sheet

1. Attempt to remove the tick intact. Usually, you can pull the tick out straight with a pair of tweezers. **Do not put the tick into formalin or alcohol.** If the tick is damaged or is too dry it cannot be tested.
2. After removing the tick, place it in the provided container or a Ziplock bag with a paper towel or cotton ball moistened with water. Keeping the tick moist will keep the tick from drying out. **LABEL THE CONTAINER**
3. Required information for the tick to be tested: Name, date of birth, gender, phone number, mailing address, date and time tick was removed, and the geographic location where the tick was acquired.
4. Only the species *Ixodes pacificus* carries the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease in this area. There is no charge by PHB Laboratory for identification of the tick species.
5. There is a charge (please call for price) to have the tick tested for the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease. Please make checks payable to H.C.P.H. **Tick testing is not covered by Insurance or Medi-Cal.**
6. Clients will be phoned directly for all **positive** tick reports. All reports (positive or negative) are mailed.

Interpretation of Results

The fluorescent antibody test performed is specific for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease. A positive result from this test indicates that the tick carries the Lyme disease bacteria, *B. burgdorferi*. It does not necessarily mean that the bacteria have infected the bitten person. Studies have shown that, among other factors, the possibility of infection with *B. burgdorferi* increases with the amount of time the tick has been attached to the person. The development of Lyme disease varies greatly.

A PERSON BITTEN BY A TICK CARRYING BORRELIA BURGDORFERI SHOULD ALWAYS CONSULT WITH THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

A non-reactive test for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, indicates that the tick tested did not harbor *Borrelia burgdorferi*, within the limits of the fluorescent antibody test. A negative test does not mean that the person is not infected by *Borrelia burgdorferi*; the person may have been bitten by another tick, or may have been bitten at another time. Ticks can cause many other diseases besides Lyme disease.

IF A PERSON WHO IS BITTEN BY A TICK BECOMES SICK IN ANY WAY, THEY SHOULD TELL THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER THAT A TICK HAS BITTEN THEM.

- If you have medical questions you may also contact the Public Health communicable disease program at 707-268-2182
- For more information go to www.cdc.gov/lyme